

To assist the Examiner's understanding of the relationship of the claim to the structure illustrated in Figure 1, a marked-up copy of Figure 1 accompanies this response. The bold dashed outline encircles those elements that make up the distributing unit. Specifically, in this embodiment, the distributing unit includes elements 109, 113, 115, 117, 203 and 207. The annotated figure also identifies the three inputs that are recited in the claim, namely the input signal A, the output signal of the thresholding unit B, and a specific value determined for each pixel C. The output value that is produced by this distributing unit, namely the weighted distribution 209, is based upon these three input signals.

The Office Action questions how the output of the adding unit 207 can be considered to be based upon three input values, since the adder only has two input terminals. One of these input terminals is connected to the multiplying unit 203, which provides an input value related to the input signal A. The other input terminal of the adder 207 receives the output of the multiplying unit 117, which in turn receives the output of the subtracting unit 115. This subtracting unit has two inputs, one of which corresponds to the output signal of the thresholding unit B, and the other of which is related to the specific value determined for each pixel C. The fact that these two inputs are combined in a subtracting unit 115 before being supplied to the adding unit 207 does not negate the fact that the output of the adding unit 207 is "based on" these input signals, as recited in the claims.

The Office Action also questions the relationship of the threshold circuit 103 to the distributing unit. It states that the threshold circuit "appears to have output

connections to both the inversion circuit 113 and the negative terminal of buffer/amp 115." It is respectfully submitted that this statement is based upon a misunderstanding of the unit. The line connecting the thresholding unit 103 to the negative input terminal of the subtracting unit 115 does not represent an output signal of the thresholding circuit. Rather, this line pertains to the output signal of the subtracting unit 109, which is supplied as an input signal to both the thresholding unit 103 and the subtracting unit 115. The output of the thresholding unit comprises the signal B that is input to the inversion unit 113. See page 5, lines 7-13 and 23-25.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the circuit in Figure 1 fully supports the recitation of a distributing unit as recited in claims 1 and 9. Specifically, the identified elements of the circuit calculate a value that is based upon the three input signals A, B and C that are recited in the claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The drawings were objected to as not showing every feature specified in the claims, namely the distributing unit that forms the basis of the rejection under the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112. From the foregoing discussion, it is believed to be apparent that the drawings do, in fact, illustrate a distributing unit of the type recited in the claims. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that no changes to the drawings are necessary. If, however, the Examiner believes that it would be beneficial to add a figure which delineates the elements of the distributing unit, for example by means of a dashed outline, Applicant will submit such a figure upon receipt of the Examiner's authorization to do so.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of the claims and the objection to the drawings have been overcome. The application is submitted to be in condition for allowance, and a Notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL PC

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By: 

James A. LaBarre

Registration No. 28,632

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620